

## **4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

This section discusses the potential adverse effects on cultural resources associated with the construction and operation of the proposed action and each alternative. This section also addresses potential Native American concerns.

### **4.4.1 Archaeological and Historical Sites**

This section discusses the potential adverse effects on archaeological and historical sites associated with the construction of transmission lines and associated access roads within the three alternative corridors. Record searches were conducted at the Arizona State Museum and using AZSITE, the on-line database of archaeological projects and sites within Arizona. This search determined the number and type of previously documented archaeological and historical sites within the three alternative corridors. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) provided information on known sites within the study corridors on the Coronado National Forest. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) determined the degree to which each of the corridors had been previously surveyed for archaeological and historical sites using AZSITE and data provided by USFS. A large percentage of each corridor has not been previously surveyed for the presence of cultural resources and it is highly likely that additional cultural resources exist that have not been recorded. Upon precise siting of the transmission line right-of-way (ROW) within any of the three proposed corridors (prior to construction activities), an intensive cultural resource inventory would be necessary of all areas of potential effect, both direct and indirect, including visual impacts, in Section 4.2, to National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible cultural resources outside the ROW.

Construction of transmission line structures and associated access roads has the potential to adversely affect archaeological and historical sites, based on the area of land disturbed, as described in Section 4.1, Land Use, and Section 4.12, Transportation. Access roads would be placed to avoid or minimize impacts to archaeological and historical sites. Upon precise siting of the transmission line ROW within the study corridor (prior to any construction activities), Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP) would take the necessary steps with all interested Native American tribes, all involved land agencies, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Advisory Council, if necessary, and any other involved agency to ensure that all cultural resources in the proposed project area are treated appropriately from the point of survey through mitigation.

Avoidance of cultural resources would be the primary means of mitigation. There is a high probability for mitigation through site avoidance, especially in upland areas away from the Santa Cruz River where site densities are generally higher. Where possible, transmission line structures, access roads, and other ground-disturbing activities would be located so as to avoid cultural resources and preserve them in place. In cases where avoidance would not be feasible, site-specific mitigation plans would be developed in consultation with interested Native American tribes, appropriate land agencies, the SHPO, and when necessary, the Advisory Council. These site-specific mitigation plans would detail the mitigation of adverse effects to significant cultural resources. Should construction activities result in the discovery of unanticipated cultural resources, construction activities at that location would be halted until the discovery could be evaluated by a professional archaeologist who would make recommendations on how the new discovery should be handled. Such recommendations could include avoidance, monitoring, testing, data recovery, or that no further work is necessary.

#### **4.4.1.1 Western Corridor**

Twenty-two previously identified archaeological and historical sites have been documented within the Western Corridor. As described in Section 3.4.1, less than 15 percent of the Western Corridor has been

previously surveyed for cultural resources. Previous investigations have focused on areas along the Santa Cruz River where site densities are generally high. Although appreciably fewer studies have taken place in the mountainous areas of the Tumacacori and Atascosa Mountains (see Figure 1.1–4), it is likely that fewer sites are located in these areas. Archaeological site densities are usually higher along rivers and washes where a wider variety of resources were available and agriculture could have been practiced. Rivers and washes commonly served as important prehistoric and historical transportation corridors. Although less studied, the mountainous segment may contain Native American rock art sites, rock shelters, and shrines, as well as Historic Period ranching and mining related sites. Valleys between mountains are expected to contain a wide variety of prehistoric and historic sites. The Atascosa Lookout Tower, an historic property outside the ROW northeast of the Western Corridor in the Atascosa Mountains (see Figure 1.1–4), would have visual impacts as portions of the Western Corridor would be visible from this location, altering the visual character of the area (also see Section 4.2, Visual Impacts).

#### **4.4.1.2      *Central Corridor***

Six archaeological and historic sites have been documented within the Central Corridor. As described in Section 3.4.1, less than 15 percent of the Central Corridor has been previously surveyed for cultural resources. Previous investigations have focused more on areas along the Santa Cruz River where site densities are generally high. Few previous archaeological studies have taken place along the central portion of this corridor south of Amado. Because the central portion of this corridor lies close to the Santa Cruz River, there is a high likelihood for the discovery of previously unrecorded sites.

Much of this alignment follows or crosses an existing EPNG pipeline alignment. Keeping construction activities to previously disturbed areas limits adverse impacts to cultural resources. The visual impacts to nearby historical sites such as the Tumacacori Mission Historic District in Tumacacori, the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park in Tubac, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail immediately adjacent to the Santa Cruz River in the proposed project area (see Figure 1.1–4) would be minimal. The I-19 area is already significantly altered from its previous state, and the proposed project would not reduce the Scenic Integrity of the area (see Section 4.2, Visual Impacts).

#### **4.4.1.3      *Crossover Corridor***

Twenty-seven archaeological and historic sites have been documented within the Crossover Corridor. As described in Section 3.4.1, less than 15 percent of the Crossover Corridor has been previously surveyed for cultural resources. Previous investigations have focused on areas along the Santa Cruz River where site densities are generally high. Although appreciably fewer studies have taken place in the mountainous portions of this corridor, it is likely that fewer sites are located in these areas. Archaeological site densities are usually higher along rivers and washes where a wider variety of resources were available and agriculture could have been practiced. Rivers and washes commonly served as important prehistoric and historical transportation corridors. Peck Canyon, in particular, may contain a high density of sites. Although less studied, the mountainous segment may contain previously unrecorded Native American rock art sites, rock shelters, and shrines, as well as Historic Period ranching and mining related sites. The Crossover Corridor may be visible in the background (approximately 5 mi [8 km] away) from the Atascosa Lookout Tower, an historic property northeast of the Western Corridor in the Atascosa Mountains (see Figure 1.1–4). The visual impact on this location would be minimal as the character of the area would not be significantly altered (also see Section 4.2, Visual Impacts).

#### **4.4.1.4      *No Action Alternative***

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur. No archaeological and historical sites would be disturbed under this alternative. No additional archaeological surveys or Native American

consultation would be undertaken in a systematic study of these areas in the foreseeable future. The Coronado National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would still allow access to public lands, and that could result in the discovery and/or the destruction of cultural sites.

#### **4.4.2 Native American Concerns**

##### **4.4.2.1 *Western Corridor***

Indian tribal representatives have expressed opposition to this corridor, but have not (to date) named specific locations of any traditional cultural properties (TCPs) or sacred sites. Several tribes (Tohono O'Odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe) have stated that they value the landscape through which the Western Corridor passes. Tribal consultations are ongoing (SWCA 2002c).

##### **4.4.2.2 *Central Corridor***

The tribes have not identified any specific TCPs along this corridor to date. On the January 2002 site visit, representatives of several tribes (Tohono O'Odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe) stated that they would prefer that the project be constructed along the Central Corridor, if it was built at all. They view the Central Corridor as an already-disturbed area. None of the tribes wished to express approval of the project overall when stating this preference. Similar statements favoring the Central Corridor, if any is to be built, were made in January 2003 meetings and a site visit (February 4, 2003) with Tohono O'Odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima Maricopa, and Ak Chin Indian Communities. Tribal consultations are ongoing.

##### **4.4.2.3 *Crossover Corridor***

This alternative has been presented to tribal representatives from the Tohono O'Odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Salt River Pima Maricopa and Ak-Chin Indian Communities (SWCA 2002c). Official tribal concerns have not yet been stated, and no specific TCPs have yet been identified along this corridor by any tribes consulted. Tribal consultations are ongoing.

##### **4.4.2.4 *No Action Alternative***

Under the No Action Alternative no construction would occur. No archaeological and historical sites would be disturbed under this alternative. No additional archaeological surveys or Native American consultation would be undertaken in a systematic study of these areas in the foreseeable future. The Coronado National Forest and BLM would still allow access to public lands, which could result in the discovery and/or the destruction of cultural sites.